

# HELPING YOUR CHILD TOWARDS A DRY CHIN

Lots of children that dribble have difficulty in knowing if their lips and chin are wet, thus they do not think to wipe. We can often help with this by putting in place ways/methods to remember to do this.

What we need

- 1) Something to wipe with
- 2) A cue to wipe
- 3) A reward for wiping

## 1) Something to wipe with

Many children find getting a hankie out of a pocket a difficult thing to do. For those children it may be possible for them to wear a sweat band on the wrist in order for them to wipe their chin. Some children have a hankie tied to their wrists for easy access. Some people who are in wheelchairs have a foam ball on a goose neck stand. A hankie is placed over the ball and changed at the appropriate interval.

## 2) A cue for wiping

If your child does not notice the saliva coming out of his/her mouth we need to give a cue for wiping. It can also be useful to teach 'swallow and wipe' together because then the mouth is cleared of saliva each time you wipe. At first you might have to remind your child to wipe and this needs to be very frequent. Soon you will feel like a broken record and need to find some other way. The following suggestions may be useful:

- Using touch cues; sometimes pressing the flat of your finger on the child's top lip helps the child to swallow. Touching the child's chin/lip may also be a touch cue.
- Using visual cues eg coloured dots, so when your child sees these a swallow/wipe occurs: or when you touch your lips with your finger
- Using auditory cues, set a timer eg oven and encourage a swallow/wipe after the buzzer, using a buzzer which goes into an earplug in the child's ear\*, reading a book- swallow and wipe every two pages.

\*These are called acualarms. Please see your speech pathologist about further information.

## 3) Rewards

- Praise is a good reward.
- If the child needs a more tangible reward, food is not a good reward because it makes the child produce more saliva. Items such as stickers or collectibles are preferable. However food rewards can be used for a period of time eg if you can stay dry while you are watching tv then you can have a chocolate milkshake.
- Always make sure there are plenty of opportunities for success. To do this make sure you check your child's chin when it's dry so you can give the praises s/he so deserves.